

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 123107

63

ORIGIN SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 SY-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 A-01

OPR-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 NSC-05

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AF/E - MR. COOTE (DRAFT)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL BUKAVU PRIORITY

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 123107

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC (SMUTS, SMITH, HUNTER AND BERGMANN)

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPED STUDENTS

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 1727

1. IN RESPONSE TO PARA 2 REFTEL, FOLLOWING MAY HELP TO
CLARIFY US POLICY ON HANDLING OF KIDNAP SITUATIONS INVOLV-
ING US CITIZENS, OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL, ABROAD.

2. THIS POLICY; EMBODIED IN A-775, FEBRUARY 5, 1975,
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PAGE 02 STATE 123107

PARTICULARLY ENCLOSURE NO. 2 THERETO, REFLECTS EARLIER,
HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC STATEMENTS INCLUDING THOSE CITED PARA 2
REFTEL, BUT ALSO REFLECTS EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST TWO YEARS.
POLICY HAS BEEN CAREFULLY FORMULATED, KEY PROVISION BEING

THAT PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFE RELEASE OF AMERICAN HOSTAGES LIES WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AND THAT QUOTE EARLY AGREEMENT SHOULD BE SOUGHT WITH THE HOST GOVERNMENT ON THAT OBJECTIVE: THE SAFE RETURN OF THE HOSTAGES BY WHATEVER MEANS MAY BE APPROPRIATE AND IF POSSIBLE WITHOUT PROVIDING AN INCENTIVE FOR FUTURE TERRORISM. END QUOTE. ANOTHER KEY PROVISION IS THAT THE USG DOES NOT PAY MONETARY RANSOM, AND THAT WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS, COMPANIES, AND INDIVIDUALS SHOULD FOLLOW SUIT IN THIS RESPECT, THE

USG HAS NO LEGAL MEANS TO RESTRAIN SUCH PARTIES IF THEY CHOOSE TO DO OTHERWISE.

3. THE ABOVE-CITED POLICIES ARE OBVIOUSLY AND UNAVOIDABLY AMBIVALENT IN THEIR EMPHASIS, FIRST, ON THE PRIMARY IMPORTANCE OF THE SAFE RECOVERY OF THE HOSTAGES AND, SECOND, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE IF POSSIBLE WITHOUT MEETING THE KIDNAPPERS' DEMANDS AND THUS PROVIDING AN INCENTIVE FOR FUTURE TERRORISM. EACH KIDNAPPING INCIDENT IS UNIQUE AND MUST BE ADDRESSED FLEXIBLY IN AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF BOTH THESE OBJECTIVES. ONE THING IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, AS REFLECTED THROUGHOUT A-775 -- THERE IS LIKELY TO BE NO PROGRESS AT ALL UNLESS COMMUNICATION CAN BE ESTABLISHED WITH THE KIDNAPPERS AND A DIALOGUE STARTED. IT MAY BE THAT LITTLE CAN BE OFFERED KIDNAPPERS IN SUCH A DIALOGUE EXCEPT, FOR EXAMPLE, APPEALS TO THE HIGHER, HUMANITARIAN INSTINCTS OF THE KIDNAPPERS TO PERMIT THE SAFE RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES. BUT EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT AS A DIALOGUE PROCEEDS, AND TIME PASSES, BREAKS OFTEN APPEAR IN WHAT MIGHT INITIALLY HAVE SEEMED TO BE A COMPLETELY STALEMATED CONFRONTATION AND THE HOSTAGES MAY BE RECOVERED WITH LITTLE OR NO RELAXATION OF THE USG'S FIRM, ANTI-TERRORIST STAND. USG HAS NEVER PAID RANSOM AND HAS NEVER LOST A HOSTAGE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THAT POSITION. BUT USG HAS IN A NUMBER OF INSTANCES, WHILE MAKING CLEAR ITS OPPOSITION TO RANSOM, STOOD ASIDE WHEN PRIVATE PARTIES INVOLVED DECIDED ON THEIR OWN RESPONSIBILITY TO MEET RANSOM DEMANDS IN WHOLE OR IN PART.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 123107

4. WITH RESPECT TO PROPOSAL PARA 8 REFTTEL, DEPT DOES NOT WISH CONSUL MACFARLANE OR ANY OTHER US OFFICIAL TO SERVE AS AN INTERMEDIARY TO THE PRP. SUCH A ROLE WOULD UNDESIRABLY RELIEVE GOT AND GOZ OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND WOULD CARRY A CONNOTATION OF ACTIVE USG APPROVAL OF ANY PRIVATE RANSOM PAYMENT WHICH WE WISH TO AVOID. WE FAVOR USE OF SOME NON-USG INTERMEDIARY ENJOYING MAXIMUM FEASIBLE DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

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